DAVID BLANKS, (left), Charlie Williams (center) and Todd Thompson (right), senior students in the agricultural machinery option are shown disassembling the front of a farm tractor. Students in the senior year work teams for the complete disassembly and assembly of a tractor which is printed in the original colors and later sold in a public auction.

Chapter projects noted

FFA helps community

A Children's Playground. A public nature trail. A wheelchair ramp for a physically handicapped individual. Landscaping the new school sign. A flagpole for a new community center. What do these six things have in common?

Each of these items is a recent project undertaken and completed by the members of the Appomattox FFA Chapter. One of over 8300 chapters of the Future Farmers of America, the Appomattox Chapter's members have emphasized community service and leadership development activities throughout the chapter's history.

Each year the chapter members and advisors select a major community development project for the chapter to focus on. In addition, chapter members select individual projects to do at home as a part of their supervised occupational experience program. Through these individual home projects, members are able to put into practical use the lessons learned in agricultural education classes. Through participation in community development projects the members learn the value of cooperation and community pride.

During 1982, chapter members spent over 35,000 hours on agricultural jobs and home projects. Their work produced approximately $163,000.00 in labor income, an average of $800 per member. In addition, chapter members spent many hours on community service projects at school and in the community, including completion of the picnic pavilion in the local children's park. For their efforts in these areas, the chapter was recognized at the 1983 national FFA convention as a silver emblem chapter in both the chapter contest and Building Our American Communities programs.

The support of the community, parents and school administration has been a vital force in the chapter's success. Chapter members look forward to the future and working on new community development projects that will benefit our local community.

Agricultural mechanics are focus of course here

Tractor overhaul, equipment set-up, diesel engine repair, are all very important skills in today's society. Students interested in these and many other skills relating to agricultural mechanics have the opportunity to take Agriculture Machinery Service at Appomattox County High School.

Agriculture Machinery is taught to tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade students. This option is very skill oriented and lends itself well to those who are interested in job entry skills in this area. The students are provided with at least half of their time spent in a lab situation actually performing the needed skills. The students are guided through the skills area performing minor ones in the tenth and eleventh grade. The twelfth grade is reserved for two hours of practice application of previously learned skills and new ones by completing disassembling a tractor engine and repairing it.

Tractor overhaul and engine analysis are the major emphasis of this program. Tractors are purchased from the Department of Highways and Transportation every year and are: overhauled, repaired, painted and then auctioned off to the public. This operation allows the students to perform those skills necessary to enter the field of tractor mechanics. Students learn how to overhaul engines, check hydraulic system, become familiar with fuel systems and many other skill areas related to tractor overhaul.

Equipment set-up has become a very important part of the ag. machinery program. Students now have the opportunity to assemble new equipment and prepare it for field use. Equipment which has been set up ranges from moldboard plows to air-cyclo corn planters. This experience is provided for by Appomattox Truck & Tractor, whose equipment is used for this part of the program.

This program has progressed a long way since its inception in 1970 in an old

(Continued on page 6)

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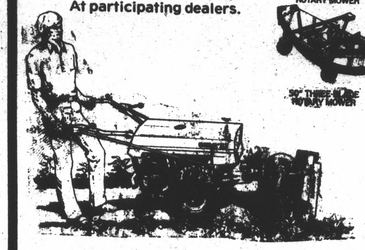

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Middle school FFA has been very busy this year

The Appomattox Middle F.F.A. has been very busy this year. The Executive Committee is composed of the following people: president, Rick Pack; vice-president, T.M. Phelps; treasurer, Tracey Garrett; sentinel, Zane Torrence; reporter, Cheryl Simpson; segretary, Latrese Lee; chaplin, Tina Grove; assistant officers, T. W. Lane, Tim Cheatham, Jeff Foltz, and Mike Cobbs.

Each officer is chairman of a committee ranging from public relations to scholarship. As chairman we've outlined activities through which we hope to achieve the goal set for each committee.

Our exhibit at the Five-County Fair won second place. It dealt with Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) milk. Several officers worked to assemble the project.

A.M.S. was host of the Hub Federation Leadership Conference on Sept. 22. Officers from all ten schools represented were in attendance. The purpose of the conference was to acquaint officers and familiarize them with their duties. We were fortunate to have State Officers Chris Johnson and David Winston on hand to speak.

Sept. 30 found us at Virginia Tech for the State Leadership Conference. There we attended classes with unlikely names like "Six Pack" and "The Force." We were also entertained by the Hokie Cheerleaders and the Gobbler.

One of our first projects was to have a forging demonstration on Railroad Day. Volunteers donned safety equipment and practiced after school for three weeks in order to let others see what forging was like many years ago. Officers in official dress were there to answer questions and sell peanuts and potted plants.

For Christmas we collected and repaired toys, clothes, and books to give to needy families. We also collected money and purchased turkeys for eighteen families in the county.

If you've been by the Appomattox Children's Park lately, you may have noticed some unfinished construction. The construction, which has been postponed until Spring, is the beginning of a fort being built by F.F.A. members. When completed, it will stand five feet tall with turrets and a cat walk.

The children aren't our only beneficiary, though. We also plan to build a planter for one of the local nursing homes. This would be designed so residents could plant vegetables or flowers without having to stoop. We also have planned to begin land-scaping the middle school grounds. This will take from three to five years to complete. Another improvement we plan to make at our school will be to make usable the upstairs of the old Auditorium. The improvements include the construction of a stage area, installation of a P.A. System and construction and installation of handrails.

Skill-level transition

Students advance in Ag Science

Agriculture Science & Mechanics II represents a transition year in the course of Agricultural Education. Students are advancing their skill levels based upon knowledge gained in Ag. Science & Mechanics I and/or Exploratory Ag. at the middle school level.

Students in the Ag. II course begin to use most of the power equipment in the Ag. Mechanics Shop. Through construction of projects and exercise work they learn the safe operation of equipment that can be used in later courses to construct student selected projects. The emphasis is on skill development in arc welding and gas welding and operation of power woodworking equipment, during which time students construct a heavy duty sawhorse as a project.

As expanded skills are developed in the shop, the students also find new doors open in other areas of Ag. Education. Students have a variety of FFA contests and activities now open to them in almost every possible field of agriculture. With the increased opportunities comes increased chances to receive recognition for contest work or supervised occupational experience programs. Ag. II students are first eligible for SOEP proficiency awards in this year of study.

The classroom studies take new direction also. Traditional agriculture units in beef cattle, dairy cattle judging and swine are part of the curriculum, but students also study the Virginia Hunter Safety Course, public speaking, record keeping and safe tractor and machinery operation. Through participation in these programs they develop skills that extend into both agricultural and non-ag careers and liesure activities.

Ag. II is also the final year that a student can take a general agricultural education course. Beyond this level, students choose among the three options of study, horticulture, ag. production or ag. machinery service. Their activities in Ag. II will lead them directly into the first year's work in one of these three fields of study.

Exploratory Ag: broad view

Exploratory agriculture is an 18 week course choice for students in grade 7 at Appomattox Middle School. It may be one of two exploratory choices at that grade level.

The course is designed to give students a broad view of the field of agriculture. "We want the students to get an understanding of just how big the field of agriculture really is," says Arthur Wiggins, an instructor of vocational agriculture. "Many of them think of agriculture as only farming, but we let them know it includes much more."

There are professional agriculture careers such as teachers, extension agents, and veterinarians. Then there are a host of careers such as sales and service persons, mechanics, fertilizer distributors, landscapers, plant and animal breeders and various technicians.

"Just by the time they get through the 18 weeks, agriculture has new meaning," adds Wiggins. Units in shop, safety, parliamentary procedure and the FFA are also included with the units in careers. Whether you live on a farm or not or being a boy or girl, you may still find exploratory agriculture an exciting class.

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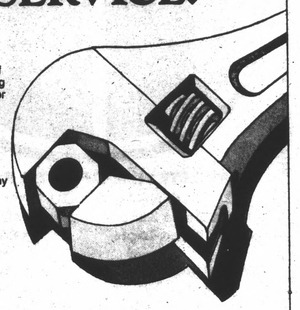

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